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Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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Organizational matters

Report on the second regular session of 2016, 1 to 2 September 2016

I. Organizational matters

1. The second regular session of 2016 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 1 to 2 September 2016.

2. The Executive Board adopted the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the second regular session (UNW/2016/L.4) and approved the report on its annual session, held from 27 June to 28 June 2016 (UNW/2016/7). The Executive Board also approved the proposed provisional agenda and workplan for the first regular session of 2017, to be held on 14 February (see annex), and discussed the draft annual workplan for 2017, in preparation for its adoption at the first regular session of 2017.

3. The Executive Board adopted one decision: 2016/4: Structured Dialogue on Financing: UN-Women's funding overview, gaps and financing strategy, as contained in the compilation of decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2016 (UNW/2016/9).

II. Opening statements

4. The President of the Executive Board, Mohamed Khaled Khiari (Permanent Representative of Tunisia), in his opening remarks, gave an overview of the work of the Board during his tenure including the current session.

5. He mentioned his participation in the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food

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Programme (WFP) and UN-Women to the Kyrgyz Republic in 2016, which he described as an invaluable experience where delegations had the opportunity to witness the operational work of the United Nations entities at country level. He took the opportunity to pay tribute to UN-Women representatives who work around the world towards making a positive difference in the lives of women and girls.

6. He spoke of his country's efforts and significant achievements in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and of the importance of translating global commitments into specific actions. He called on Member States to be ardent defenders of the cause of women in their respective countries and to be generous in their contributions to support the work of UN-Women. In concluding, he called on the men among the delegations to support the HeforShe campaign.

7. In her opening remarks, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, thanked the President, Bureau and entire Executive Board for their work throughout the year. She announced recent key staff appointments, promotions and impending retirement, expressing her gratitude for their hard work and dedication.

8. Reminding delegations of the 14-year time-frame towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the head of the Entity stated that the agenda of this second regular session of the Executive Board, provided an opportunity to consider and move ahead with innovative approaches in many areas of work and planning, against a backdrop of limited resources. She spoke of the challenge of the gender funding gap being linked to the persistence of deep-rooted prejudice against women and unconscious bias. This phenomenon, she opined, has led to chronically limited investment in women, at all levels and varying situations around the world.

9. While underscoring that UN-Women had not yet reached the level of funding that would enable the Entity to effectively transform the lives of women and girls to the extent envisioned, the 2016 Structured Dialogue on Financing report sought to outline the next steps in addressing this deep rooted gender funding gap challenge, with a view to implementing the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.

10. One key strategy proposed for addressing the growing funding gap was the convening of high-level roundtables to garner support for individual flagship programmes. She called for the commitment of Member States, with the Executive Board at the helm, to co-convene these round tables, and to champion a flagship programme that is closely aligned with their respective development objectives.

11. Speaking of the agenda items entitled: "Corporate evaluation of the UN-Women contribution to United Nations system coordination on gender equality and women's empowerment", she stated that this evaluation underlined the importance of coordination as a central element of UN-Women's mandate. This evaluation also found that many factors affecting the ability of the Entity to implement this aspect of the mandate actually lay outside its control. The head of the Entity invited Member States to lend their support, as members of the Executive Boards of other United Nations entities.

12. Regarding the agenda item on audit, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director highlighted that UN-Women received its fifth unqualified audit opinion on its Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2015.

13. She concluded her opening statement by stressing the importance of ensuring that the United Nations continues to lead by example in promoting gender equality. Speaking of the current gender-balanced pool of candidates for the post of the next United Nations Secretary-General, she underscored that this was an opportune time for a woman Secretary-General to be appointed. "A woman and feminist Secretary-General could provide strong leadership and be an inspiration for far-reaching steps for an inclusive world through the implementation of Agenda 2030."

III. Structured dialogue on financing

14. The Deputy Director, Policy and Programmes, presented the report on Structured Dialogue on Financing: UN-Women's funding overview, gaps and financing strategy (UNW/2016/8). He outlined the progress made by UN-Women in linking its results management system and enterprise resource planning system (ATLAS), and pledged that the Entity would make public as much information as possible, on its website in 2018. UN-Women has scaled up its programming and strengthened its programme development capacity in line with its strategic plan, currently seeing rapid growth in the areas of Women, Peace and Security and Women's Economic Empowerment. UN-Women was also in the process of refining its programme focus, decreasing the number of programme outputs and focusing on flagship programmes. He highlighted the concern of the limited core resources that could hinder the Entity's capacity to produce results. As mentioned by the head of the Entity, to remedy this funding gap, UN-Women planned to co-convene donor round tables to build partnerships and flag any existing funding needs as it continued to advocate for burden sharing among partners. He reiterated the call to Executive Board Members to co-convene donor round tables fully aligned to their national development plans.

15. All speakers acknowledged the gender funding gap and praised the report on "Structured dialogue on financing" as a demonstration of the Entity's commitment to ensure transparency and accountability.

16. Several delegations congratulated UN-Women for its efforts in United Nations coordination and its normative work, while underscoring that there was still much work to be done at the national level. Another speaker acknowledged the good work of UN-Women as chair of the Global Migration Group. UN-Women was also thanked by one delegation for its support to the High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment.

17. The need to enhance focus on political solutions and prevention of conflicts before they erupt was mentioned, emphasizing the importance of engaging with civil society organizations in order to ensure lasting peace and sustainable development. It was noted that humanitarian crises and large movements of people were indicative of the connectivity between the three pillars of the United Nations: development; human rights; and peace and security. Furthermore, UN-Women has a unique mandate within these three pillars. Some speakers acknowledged that the demand for UN-Women's assistance is increasing, although the Entity's budget remains limited.

18. Several speakers urged UN-Women to strengthen its efforts to secure innovative financing by further broadening its funding base. A delegation emphasized the need to develop transparent criteria for private sector funding of the

Entity and called for an Entity that supports all Member States irrespective of their level of funding. In the current context of limited resources, some speakers called for the prioritization of the Entity's work while minimizing overlaps and redundancies. There was general praise and appreciation for the flagship programme initiatives, with particular support for the plan to organize donor round tables.

19. Some delegations pledged to maintain their financial contributions to the Entity, while the Swedish delegation announced an increase in core funding of USD 2.3 million having been recently approved by their Parliament. One speaker underlined that the majority of the Entity's core resources emanated from a limited number of donors and suggested that UN-Women prepares a scenario based on the decrease of core resources (contingency plan). A delegation requested additional information on the criteria/rules of the internal formula for the allocation of programmable resources by region.

20. It was emphasized that UN-Women should play an important role in gender responsive implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda, and highlighted that UN-Women should strengthen its strategic position as a coordinating entity for gender equality and women's empowerment within the United Nations. One speaker commended UN-Women's role in influencing and leading, in ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment are at the heart of preventing violent extremism. The speaker appreciated the efforts and important work of the Entity in other areas such as preventing and reducing gender-based violence, including violence against indigenous women and girls and sexual and reproductive rights, as well as political empowerment (in particular, the development of a framework to prevent violence against women and girls – with particular appreciation expressed for the global study on Women Peace and Security in 2015).

21. One Member State highlighted the significance of the Antalya Political Declaration adopted in May 2016 that reaffirmed commitment to the Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries, including specific measures and actions for gender equality and women's empowerment. The delegation underscored UN-Women's key role in the implementation and follow up on these commitments. Another speaker suggested that UN-Women should consider creating a "Champion award for women's empowerment".

22. UN-Women's important role in the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review process and the principles of transparency and accountability were highlighted by many delegations.

23. Referring to specific national developments, Colombia noted that UN-Women was a first-hand witness to the signing of the Colombian peace agreement in Havana and underscored their commitment to continue to ensure that the Entity helps to build peace and implement United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2122. The United Arab Emirates welcomed the opening of UN-Women's office in Abu Dhabi which would strengthen the Entity's support in the country and region. Japan highlighted their preparations to host the 3rd World Assembly for Women to be held in the Fall of 2016 in Tokyo, and mentioned that their Prime Minister was looking forward once again to the participation of the UN-Women Under-Secretary General/Executive Director.

24. UN-Women management reiterated that the structured dialogue on financing was taken very seriously. UN-Women was committed to ensuring transparency and

public access to information. It was stressed that women's empowerment is both a right and a solution for development and that providing core resources to UN-Women is a good investment that would have catalytic effect. It was agreed that there was need for a strategy in case the Entity did not reach projected fund mobilization levels. It was underscored however, that UN-Women is a relatively small Entity while the challenges of women are very significant. Given the potential significant impact therefore, reducing the work of UN-Women on the ground should be the last resort.

IV. Report on the independent and external assessment of the harmonized cost recovery methodology

25. An independent and external consultant presented the findings of the assessment of the harmonized cost recovery methodology to the Executive Board. His presentation addressed the declining core funding to UN-Women and emphasized that this was a part of a general decade-long trend. He highlighted how a harmonized approach to cost recovery would facilitate enhanced transparency and United Nations system-wide coherence, reduced transaction costs, and the elimination of competition among United Nations agencies.

26. He recommended that agencies support full cost recovery by: (a) working with funding partners, to reverse the decline of core funding and to ensure that all direct costs are included in programmes; (b) minimizing waivers and review long-term agreements with the goal of applying the standard rate uniformly; (c) developing policies for providing volume discounts for later contributions and premium rates for small contributions; (d) factoring in security risk into programme funding; (e) reviewing arrangements for pooled funding within the United Nations system; and (f) when appropriate agencies should propose review of approved reduced rates.

27. The Director of Management and Administration introduced the newly-appointed UN-Women Chief of Budget, who presented to the Executive Board information on the mandates guiding UN-Women's cost recovery framework and the calculations of the cost recovery rate based on the mandated framework.

28. Delegations warmly thanked UN-Women for placing a cost recovery discussion on the official agenda of the Executive Board and welcomed the independent and external report of the consultant. Delegations expressed appreciation for the presentation of additional and new information from UN-Women and welcomed the efforts made to apply the cost recovery methodology.

29. Some delegations were pleased that the number of waivers and exceptions were decreasing, however expressed some concern about cross-subsidization. Some delegations expressed interest in receiving further information on whether the cost recovery policy was on track after the three-year implementation period to deliver full cost recovery, as requested by Executive Board decision 2013/2. Future reporting on this matter should analyse whether there were gaps and what measures should be taken to readjust, as well as spelling out lessons learned on the implementation. The analysis of the cost recovery policy effectiveness should be presented to the Executive Board in time for it to be taken into account in the development of the next strategic plan 2018-2021 and next integrated budget discussions which will primarily take place at its Annual Session 2017. A delegation

emphasized that the next strategic plan must be developed in a highly participatory and holistic manner in close cooperation with member states and in that regard expected that this matter be also discussed at the first session 2017.

V. Briefings:

A. Operational response of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women at the country level: Morocco

30. The UN-Women representative in Morocco made a presentation on the work of UN-Women in the country and gave a summary of the development results to date.

31. In a context marked by major upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa region, the new Constitution adopted by Morocco in 2011 provided an important framework for promoting women's human rights and for the advocacy of civil society organizations. The institutionalization of gender-sensitive public policies was a key aspect of the Morocco Multi Country Office's work. The presentation to the Board focused on gender mainstreaming in public policies in the following impact areas: (a) leadership and political participation; (b) women's economic empowerment; (c) ending violence against women; and (d) planning and budgeting.

32. A major achievement in the area of leadership and political participation, took place with the institutionalization of the "Parliamentarians for Parity and Equality" working group within the House of Representatives. A one-third quota for women in decision-making bodies of the House of Representatives was also integrated within the Parliament's internal rules.

33. An example of UN-Women's work in the area of women's economic empowerment was its support to the development of innovative approaches in promoting women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. There has been increased awareness from the government on the issue of violence against women in Morocco, particularly due to the data made available on this phenomenon through the first national survey on the prevalence of violence against women, High Commissariat for Planning (with the support of UN-Women), as well as women's rights Non-Governmental Organizations' awareness-raising and advocacy efforts to address this issue.

34. UN-Women has worked with the Ministry of Economy and Finance in mainstreaming gender equality into public finance management and implementation of gender-responsive budgeting. A gender budget report is annually presented to the parliament as part of the Finance Bill. Moreover, the new Organic Finance Law, issued in 2015, has institutionalized this report and called for the introduction of gender indicators in the performance reports of sectoral departments, hence reinforcing accountability mechanisms for the achievement of gender equality. UN-Women therefore worked with the Ministry of Economy and Finance's gender-responsive budgeting Centre of Excellence in order to increase the number of Ministerial Departments using gender-sensitive indicators for planning/monitoring budgets, but also to promote south-north and south-south exchanges on gender-responsive budgeting.

35. The Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations led the way in thanking UN-Women for its work in Morocco. His appreciation for the work of the Entity was echoed by additional delegations.

B. Innovations to scale up gender equality and the empowerment of women

36. The Under-Secretary General/Executive Director, in her introduction, emphasized that current trajectories towards gender equality would not result in the world we want within the planned timeframe. It is therefore necessary through innovation to find new, creative and impactful ways of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. In the case of UN-Women, innovation is outcome focused and driven by the imperative to accelerate progress towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. UN-Women prioritized innovation as one of its strategic initiatives in order to achieve the results outlined in its strategic plan 2014-2017.

37. UN-Women identified three key challenges relating to innovating in this regard: the under-representation of women as social innovators and entrepreneurs; the high level of risks associated with innovation, which creates incentives to adhere to the status quo; and the under-investment in innovation for gender equality.

38. The Deputy Executive Director, Policy and Programmes spoke of the strategic approach of UN-Women to innovating for gender equality. In line with UN-Women's objective to leverage innovation with a view to accelerating progress for gender equality and women's empowerment, and in order to address the aforementioned challenges, UN-Women adopted a three-pronged approach: Co-identifying potential high impact innovations to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, notably by promoting women as innovators; Testing, prototyping and piloting, supported by rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems to facilitate adaptive management; and Scaling up innovations to increase impact in the lives of women and girls.

39. The Deputy Executive Director explained that emphasis was being placed on partnering, learning and strengthening internal capacities. This three-pronged approach allowed management to evaluate and select high potential impact innovation opportunities. The goal is to eliminate inadequate proposals before they consume excessive resources while allowing strong ideas to filter through the process and be scaled up. He highlighted examples of the Entity's innovation work, such as the creation of an internal innovation incubator, which trains and supports internal innovation champions to identify new approaches and solutions to accelerate progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. Through the group of champions at global, regional and country level, 10 innovative projects were launched. These projects ranged from engaging home-based women in the sharing economy through social ventures, to trials around behavioural therapy to prevent violence against women, to using service journey mapping and insights around rural women farmers' uptake of technology.

40. Looking ahead, based on lessons learned and building on its successes, UN-Women would continue to work on strengthening its internal innovation capacity and to expand and strengthen its partnerships in the area of innovation for gender equality, with United Nations agencies, Member States, civil society, and the private sector - a number of which have innovation development hubs. UN-Women would also aim to strengthen monitoring, measuring and evaluating results from its innovation investments. This would ensure that the Entity directs its limited resources towards areas with the greatest potential for impact. It would also be

necessary for UN-Women to ensure that all its experience, lessons learned and best practices from innovation are embedded in its new strategic plan to accelerate the achievement of gender equality for every women and every girl worldwide.

41. Interventions from the floor conveyed appreciation of UN-Women's pioneering work on innovation. Speakers commended UN-Women for playing an important role of bringing knowledge partners together on this issue. Innovation was viewed as being about effective and new solutions; reducing costs; reaching further; and leaving no one behind. It was also about claiming rights, for instance, the issue of women's access to land property title. Delegations welcomed the approach by UN-Women of fostering the culture of innovation within the Entity itself. There was need to keep in mind however, the risks of promoting innovation. One example of which was related to the United Nations Financial Regulations and rules that have largely remain unchanged for several decades, and therefore may need to be revisited to ascertain what adjustments would need to be made. Speakers looked forward to hearing more about the emerging results of the incubator projects. One speaker welcomed UN-Women's approach of defining women as active actors in the field of innovation. The delegation urged the Entity to systematically promote gender equality together with United Nations agencies and other partners involved in innovation work. The speaker also encouraged UN-Women to further strengthen its organizational capacity and skills in order to drive innovation. One Member State underlined the importance of disseminating information on initiatives particularly at the field level, which in turn would facilitate building alliances in this important area.

C. Roadmap for the preparation of the strategic plan 2018-2021

42. The new Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review for operational activities for development of the United Nations system (expected in December 2016), builds on the "Fit for Purpose" discussions and the related United Nations Economic and Social Council dialogue. It was expected to have a major influence on the shaping of the new UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The purpose of this five-part roadmap (1. Context; 2. Design principles and approach; 3. Lessons learned from the midterm review; 4. Overall framework; and 5. Timeline), was to provide the Executive Board with an understanding of the process that UN-Women proposes for the development of its strategic plan.

43. The key contextual and design issues to be taken into account in the process, would provide an opportunity to explore in greater depth, some topics that emerged during the midterm review of the current strategic plan that could not be comprehensively addressed. The design of the new strategic plan would follow a number of principles:

(a) Build on lessons learned from midterm review of the strategic plan 2014-2017 and on recommendations from key evaluations;

(b) Further strengthen the alignment with Beijing + 20 findings and in support of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(c) Fully integrate the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review guidance;

(d) Ensure complementarity with other United Nations agencies; and

(e) Strengthen linkages between resources and results, including in the context of the next Integrated Budget.

44. Among the lessons learned was the increasing demand for UN Women's support, including in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Some examples of increased demand were with respect to the leadership of the Commission on the Status of Women: significant increase in the number of participants and in side events (from 73 to over 200); normative support: new responsibilities emanating from the 2030 Agenda, such as support to Sustainable Development Goals indicators methodology development and monitoring; and United Nations Coordination: Reporting on the UN-SWAP increased from 55 to 64 entities in 2 years.

45. Lessons learned also related to programmatic focus and operational effectiveness. There was successful delivery of planned activities and outputs but weaknesses needed to be addressed. Flagship Programming Initiatives consolidate small-scale, short-duration projects into large, high-impact, scalable multi-stakeholder programmes. Greater focus was required in country level programming, and business process reengineering needed to deliver on time, on scope and on budget, thus eliminating bottlenecks.

46. Resource constraints were highlighted noting that political commitment was not commensurate with financial commitments to UN-Women, which remained far below the $500 million threshold. Resource gaps hinder the Entity's efforts to fully deliver on its strategic plan and were a threat to programme sustainability. UN-Women undertook initiatives to track resource gaps and to more clearly demonstrate how they negatively impact the achievement of results.

47. UN-Women management informed the Board of plans to have a discussion and to convene an informal workshop on the main direction and key issues of the next strategic plan on the margins of the 2017 first regular session. These discussions would then feed into a draft document to be considered during the Annual session of the Executive Board and pave the way for a final full-fledged report to be submitted to the Board at its second regular session 2017.

48. Member States thanked UN-Women's management for its comprehensive, clear and well-structured presentation. There was an overarching call and expression of willingness by member states to be involved throughout the process in follow up to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. While cautioning against pre-empting the outcome of this process, speakers underlined their readiness to be closely engaged in guiding the drafting of the next strategic plan and providing direction to UN-Women throughout the process. A delegation emphasized the need to be provided with a full picture of the major intersecting intergovernmental discussions which will take place at the Executive Board in 2017 to facilitate a full road-mapping exercise, for example with respect to the next integrated budget and the next strategic plan respective development plans. One speaker reiterated the importance of having all documents available early enough to inform discussions. Different options should also be presented for discussion thus enabling delegations to more easily identify risks and opportunities. Another delegation welcomed UN-Women's efforts to foster strong partnerships and stressed the need for more to be done with the private sector. The importance of strengthening the capacity of UN-Women staff at all levels with adequate training was also raised.

VI. Evaluation

49. The Director of the Independent Evaluation Office presented the report on the Meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN-women in 2015. The purpose of this meta-analysis was to capture the key insights from evaluation reports that met UN-Women quality standards. The findings would also be used to inform the new Strategic Plan of UN-Women (2018-2022) and feed into ongoing efforts to improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

50. The scope of the meta-analysis includes corporate and decentralized evaluation reports produced by UN-Women in 2015 (28 evaluations) and 2014 (21 evaluations) that were rated as "satisfactory" or higher, in the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System. For 2015, it included three country portfolio evaluations for the first time. The analysis also provided a useful overview on a series of common patterns over time by making reference to previous meta-analyses. This provided useful insights and showed the extent to which progress had been made on some of the emergent insights identified in previous meta-analysis.

51. The overall conclusion of this analysis was that UN-Women interventions were relevant and largely making positive contributions towards gender equality and women's empowerment. However, there was scope to improve results-based management systems, efficiency and sustainability at the country level.

52. The following recommendations were developed based on the conclusions and findings. Recommendation 1: Address the fragmentation of thematic areas and mandates. The most pressing need—given its negative impacts on both effectiveness and efficiency—is addressing the fragmentation of project work between different thematic areas and different aspects of the integrated mandate. According to evaluations, this is currently entrenched with a combination of organizational structures, capacities at the country level, and a need for more strategic prioritization of issues during programme design. The future strategic plan and the rollout of the Flagship Programmes Initiatives should thus give particular attention to maximizing country and regional-level synergies in practical ways.

53. Recommendation 2: Boost country-level United Nations coordination as a means to drive synergies and efficiency. The evidence from evaluations suggests that UN coordination is relatively underexplored as a mechanism for realizing the synergies identified in recommendation 1. It is considered relevant, therefore, to give particular attention to strengthening the United Nations coordination function of UN-Women at the country level as a means to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of its operation and normative work. The main space in which cross-links between thematic areas have been realized has been within joint programmes. However, even without joint programming, there was considerable scope for boosting political buy-in, access to relevant partners, and support to the implementation of gender norms at scale.

54. Recommendation 3: Examine the case for multi-year country programme modalities to address concerns with short project cooperation agreements and sustainability. Many of the sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency issues now being faced by UN-Women, according to evaluations, have also affected other United Nations entities. Foremost among these was the short duration and unreliability of funding to project cooperation agreements and the challenge of

securing national ownership and building capacity. Evaluations specifically recommend shifting from a project to a programmatic approach. To some extent, the flagship programme initiatives have already begun to do this. However, given the opportunity of the development of a new strategic plan, it was recommended that the case be examined for adopting a multi-year country programme jointly developed with governments or alternative approaches to addressing the underlying challenges.

55. Recommendation 4: Expand and innovate the core value proposition of capacity development and technical assistance so as to include knowledge management and brokerage. UN-Women's country-level and global programme strategies were strongly focused on capacity development, which was found to be a largely relevant and necessary—but not sufficient—approach to ensuring development effectiveness. Given the demand and opportunity identified by evaluations, it was recommended that an explicit strategy is explored to complement the capacity development approach with a core organizational competency in knowledge management and brokerage.

56. Recommendation 5: Adopt special measures to address results-based management and monitoring at the country level. There was a clear gap in the availability and use of effective and appropriate monitoring systems at the country level, and this is affecting the ability of UN-Women to implement results-based management systems. Given the constraints on staffing at the country level and the unmet need for specialist capabilities, it was recommended that the new strategic plan be viewed as an opportunity to undertake an intensive corporate-level initiative designed to address the gap in monitoring systems, practices and experience.

57. Recommendation 6: More high level and strategic country portfolio evaluations should be conducted. The body of decentralized evaluations included in the 2015 and 2014 meta-analyses were informative, but only a relatively small number (including country portfolio evaluations and some multi-country programme evaluations) give a broader picture on UN-Women's strategic positioning, operations and synergies. As a result, the evidence available on particular issues is somewhat limited. There was a level of consistency with the findings on coverage of evidence between the meta-analyses in 2013 and 2015, suggesting that more high level and strategic country portfolio evaluations should be conducted.

58. The management response was presented by the Director of Programmes. In summary, UN-Women had addressed many of the recommendations mainly through the following actions:

(a) Adoption of the Flagship Programme Initiatives, representing a major shift in programming approach;

(b) Implementation of a corporate results based management strategy through standards setting and alignment of systems, functions and incentives;

(c) Implementation of Innovation Approach;

(d) Updating of UN-Women coordination strategy accompanied by operational guidance; and

(e) Incorporation of country portfolio evaluations into country evaluation plans.

59. The Director of the Independent Evaluation Office presented the corporate evaluation of the UN-Women contribution to the United Nations system coordination on gender equality and women's empowerment.

60. As mandated by the UN-Women Corporate Evaluation Plan 2014-2017, the UN-Women Independent Evaluation Office undertook a corporate thematic evaluation of the UN-Women contribution to United Nations (UN) system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The main purpose of the evaluation was to inform strategic decision-making, organizational learning and accountability, as well as generating knowledge on what works and what doesn't in key aspects of UN coordination to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women at global, regional and country levels. The evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness and organizational efficiency of UN-Women's UN coordination mandate on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

61. As defined in its founding resolution and subsequent strategic documents, UN-Women's UN coordination role includes three aspects: leadership and advocacy; promoting accountability of the UN system in relation to its gender equality and the empowerment of women commitments; and coordinating by engaging in system-wide and interagency efforts that promote and advance gender equality and the empowerment of women at global, regional and national levels. Seven main conclusions emanated from this evaluation:

(a) UN-Women has implemented its United Nations coordination role in a highly complex environment. The challenges in coordinating efforts in the United Nations system are well known and widely acknowledged.

(b) In five years, UN-Women built a solid foundation for the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of its United Nations coordination role. It has made notable contributions to strengthening United Nations system coherence, capacity, mobilization and accountability for gender equality and the empowerment of women-related work.

(c) Despite external challenges, internal limitations and the short time it has been in operation, UN-Women in its United Nations coordination role has been able to demonstrate good practices.

(d) More needs to be done to effectively demonstrate results obtained from the coordination of the United Nations system on gender equality and the empowerment of women; and to reiterate further the shared accountability for gender equality and the empowerment of women across the United Nations system.

(e) UN-Women's strategic positioning for United Nations coordination is shaped not only by its existing assets, but also by the extent to which United Nations partners recognize its added value and demand its coordination efforts.

(f) The United Nations is not leading by example with regard to gender equality. While UN-Women has set some positive practices as examples for other United Nations entities, it had not yet consistently modelled principles of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

(g) UN-Women's rapid evolution has required ongoing adjustments in systems and practices that did not yet consistently translate into efficient and effective support for implementation of the United Nations coordination mandate.

62. The evaluation identified eight recommendations that were critical for UN-Women's future contribution to United Nations coordination. Many factors that affect UN-Women's ability to implement its United Nations coordination mandate are inherent to the United Nations system and lie outside UN-Women's control and/or sphere of influence. Similarly, the effects of chronic underfunding for UN-Women cannot be underestimated.

(a) UN-Women should continue to actively engage in strategic dialogue with other United Nations entities and Member States to catalyse greater system coordination and coherence on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

(b) UN-Women should align the current Coordination Strategy with the Strategic Plan and current UN context, bringing greater focus on UN coordination as a means for development results and changes for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

(c) UN-Women should align the scope of its mandate with its resource base.

(d) UN-Women should provide operational guidance for UN-Women staff on how to approach, plan, implement and report on its United Nations coordination role in different geographic and thematic contexts.

(e) UN-Women should enhance its role in promoting United Nations system accountability for its commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

(f) UN-Women should strengthen its efforts to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women principles are consistently taken into account by the United Nations system in the areas of UN-Women's thematic expertise.

(g) UN-Women should modify policies and practices in order to model a gender-responsive organization for the United Nations.

(h) UN-Women should strengthen gender-focused coordination mechanisms at Headquarters and in the field that have been key to its approach to implementing its United Nations coordination mandate.

63. The Director of Coordination presented the management response to the corporate evaluation of the contribution of UN-Women to United Nations system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

64. This was the first corporate formative evaluation of the implementation of the Entity's inter agency and system wide functions for gender equality and the empowerment of women. The evaluation provided timely insights and lessons learned, useful for implementation of UN-Women's composite mandate. The evaluation yielded both an assessment of the achievements in leveraging the collective strength of the United Nations system and offered recommendations to further enhance aspects of the Entity's coordination functions, which effectively enhance programmatic and functional coherence. UN-Women as a United Nations entity was the result of Member States' resolve to achieve greater coherence. Its universal mandate integrates development, peace and security, humanitarian action and human rights, through normative support, coordination, and operational activities. The Commission on the Status of Women at its 59th and 60th sessions requested the Entity to fully leverage the United Nations system for the effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the gender

responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. UN-Women is fit for purpose to deliver results – including jointly with the rest of the United Nations System. The Entity has gone through a full process of maturity both in terms of strategic positioning and of organizational effectiveness, as it was also confirmed by other evaluations and multilateral reviews. UN-Women sees its role as true catalyst for change by utilizing its triple mandate—normative, coordination and operational—in a fully integrated fashion, and ensuring coherence in its work, especially as is increasingly defined by the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

65. Member States thanked UN-Women for the briefings which was viewed as informative and extensive. One delegation requested more information on multiyear programme work and related dialogues with civil society. Concerning South-South cooperation, the speaker asked whether triangular cooperation schemes were considered within the framework of south-south cooperation. On gender equality policies within UN-Women itself, the speaker acknowledged that while there may be room for improvement, the Entity should seek to strengthen this aspect, for example with respect to maternity versus paternity leave. Another speaker commended policy development at the Headquarters level noting the need to ensure that experience and lessons learned were reflected in the new strategic plan. The delegation emphasized that the coordination strategy should be integrated into next strategic plan and asked how the Entity planned to engage with United Nations country teams in the development of national strategies for the follow up of the Sustainable Development Goals. Some speakers stressed the need to strengthen results-based management at the country level and asked UN-Women management to inform the Executive Board if possible, of its plans and approaches to address capacity development and knowledge management.

66. One speaker requested a concept note for the new strategic plan at the next meeting of the Executive Board, (at the first regular session in 2017), with a view to providing some preliminary directions on planning and priorities. The Member State asked that insights and follow-up from the evaluation of the coordination work of UN-Women be included, as well as plans to implement the new Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

VII. Audit

67. The Chief of Accounts presented the management response to the financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2015 and corresponding Report of the Board of Auditors.[1] The overall audit opinion stated: "In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of UN-Women as at 31 December 2015 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with IPSAS[2]."

68. The Board made several recommendations based on its audit. Some of the main ones were that UN-Women: (a) (i) Financially close all operationally closed projects within 12 months from the moment they are operationally completed or terminated; and (ii) ensure that appropriate staff resources are available and an

[1] Report of the Board of Auditors for 2015 A/71/5 Add.12.
[2] International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

automation tool is developed so as to expedite the financial closure of projects; (b) (i) Enhance clarity on the due diligence process for writing off unrecoverable advances; (ii) ensure project managers prioritize long-outstanding advances as a financial risk area; and (iii) enhance training for staff and implementing partners on understanding the terms and conditions of signed project cooperation agreements, the use of funding authorization and certificate of expenditure forms and policies on cash advances and other transfers to partners; (c) (i) Develop the awareness training programme on information security based on a needs assessment; and (ii) conduct mandatory awareness training on information security for all staff to ensure that they understand the various information security risks.

69. The implementation status for 2015 of the 17 audit recommendations since June 2016 was outlined: Two recommendations already implemented (ICT Board membership and terms of reference updated; Information Security Awareness training program developed); while 15 recommendations were under implementation.

70. Several delegations requested that the Board of Auditors report be presented to the Executive Board in its Second Session of 2017. One speaker asked the management for a presentation to the board on its approaches to capacity development and knowledge management. This was also linked to raising political awareness on the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment. A Member State noted that in 2015 there was huge delay in financial closure and opined that it could potentially discredit UN-Women's overall capacity. There was need to take urgent measures to address this issue.

VIII. Report of the joint field visit of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services and the Executive Boards of the United Nations Children's Fund, UN-Women and the World Food Programme to the Kyrgyz Republic, 2 to 7 May 2016

71. For the annual joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, WFP and UN-Women, a delegation of 21 members visited the Kyrgyz Republic from 2 to 7 May 2016, with the purpose of enhancing participants' understanding of the extent and ways in which the United Nations development system was assisting the Kyrgyz Republic to implement its national development strategy and the newly approved Sustainable Development Goals. The report on this visit was presented by the main rapporteur from Switzerland.

72. Some of the key recommendations, suggestions and challenges outlined in the report were the following: There was an excellent collaborative and committed spirit within the United Nations country team, operating in a 'Delivering as One' structure. In order to assist United Nations country teams in other countries to also work well together, the Kyrgyz experience/case could be further studied. For example, the delegation was interested in further identifying the success factors, incentives and bottlenecks in implementing the 'Delivering as One' approach in the

Kyrgyz Republic. In light of the 2030 Agenda, this study could also identify lessons learned and good practices. Collaboration with the Peacebuilding Recovery Facility demonstrates a convincing case of the integrated work of peacebuilding and development in a joint programme of several United Nations agencies. The formulation of the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework is always an opportunity to review the priorities of the United Nations in the Kyrgyz Republic to increase its focus and the number of joint programmes, as well as to reduce the number of small interventions in order to be more strategic and oriented towards the long term.

73. United Nations agencies could also consider some fundraising with the international private sector (corporate social responsibility) and some philanthropic international organizations, to broaden their donor base. School-feeding programmes and children's education are themes that usually attract those kinds of partners. Some strategic partnerships with the international private sector on knowledge and skills might also be promising. The United Nations could also consider supporting the Government for local resource mobilization to increase the budget of the State.

74. In the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, inclusivity (leave no one behind) is an important challenge. The United Nations might jointly support the central, provincial and local government level in training and knowledge sharing in the implementation of the Goals. The implementation of the Goals, as well as follow-up, review and monitoring should be done in an inclusive manner, with the involvement of all key partners/actors.

75. The Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic underlined that such joint Executive Boards field visits was of great importance both for the government and the United Nations Country Team. She also highlighted UN-Women's activities in Kyrgyz Republic and commended particularly, the Entity's work in the area of economic empowerment of rural women.

IX. Other matters

76. Several Member States in a joint statement appreciated efforts made by UN-Women to make the humanitarian system more efficient and effective. They called for an update on how UN-Women was instituting its Grand Bargain commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit, both internally and in cooperation with other stakeholders. They looked forward to learning more about UN-Women's prioritization of the various work streams as the Entity moved towards full implementation of the Grand Bargain emanating from the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016. The delegations urged each signatory to outline how it was addressing the Grand Bargain commitments and requested UN-Women to share by the end of 2016, an implementation plan with the Executive Board providing details on how Grand Bargain commitments are being implemented by the Entity, ensuring that implementation plans duly address and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. They specifically refereed to strategic gaps in the humanitarian system with respect to: (a) joint, comprehensive, and objective context analysis and needs assessments; (b) holistic and prioritized response strategies that address needs according to urgency and are inclusive of all affected populations; (c) improved context-specific operational coordination and

information management systems; and (d) mutually accountable leadership structures.

77. In addition, the delegations requested UN-Women to continue to advocate for the inclusion of Internally Displaced Persons in the development of national laws, policies, and humanitarian and development strategies, including the specific needs of women and girls.

X. Closing

78. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked the President for his leadership, the Vice-Presidents for their supportive and constructive guidance throughout the session, particularly with respect to the skilful facilitation of complex deliberations that led to the successful adoption of a decision on the structured dialogue on financing. On behalf of the delegates, she also expressed appreciation to the President for inviting to this Board session Ms. Wided Bouchamaoui, member of the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015.

79. She appreciated the Executive Board's clarity in understanding the role of UN-Women and the importance of gender equality if Agenda 2030 is to be achieved. In addition, she thanked the Board for understanding the challenges that the Entity continues to face as well as the expressions of encouragement for the report with respect to the structured dialogue on financing. In this regard, the head of UN-Women noted that the decision 2016/4 that the Executive Board had just adopted included a variety of elements required to achieve the expected fundraising levels in a new and innovative manner.

80. She noted Member States' acknowledgement of the need to increase resources and the number of donors with whom the Entity engages, in addition to the importance of doing more with the private sector. While thanking the Government of Sweden for additional funds pledged to the Entity, she welcomed announcements made by others to maintain their contributions and support to the Entity.

81. She commended several delegations for achievements highlighted in their respective national statements in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

82. The President of the Board expressed his appreciation to the Vice-Presidents for their collaboration and willingness to facilitate negotiations and chair meetings in his absence. He thanked Member States for their collaboration and flexibility and expressed appreciation for the work of the Executive Board Secretary and the secretariat team and all UN-Women staff for their support. The meeting was then adjourned.

Annex I

Decisions adopted at the second regular session of 2016

2016/4
Report on Structured Dialogue on Financing: UN-Women's funding overview, gaps and financing strategy

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the report on Structured Dialogue on Financing: UN-Women's funding overview, gaps and financing strategy, and appreciates UN-Women's engagement in this structured dialogue with Member States, with a view to tracking, assessing and following up on the level of funding it receives, including of core resources, as well as the predictability, flexibility and alignment of resources provided for the implementation of the strategic plan 2014-2017;

2. *Recognizes* that the demand for UN-Women's support is substantial and that UN-Women's support functions have increased;

3. *Recognizes* the importance of UN-Women being provided with predictable, flexible, quality and timely resources and notes the need to address the funding gap in resources to enable the Entity to fully implement its strategic plan 2014-2017, and to respond to its central role in supporting Member States, upon their request, in the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

4. *Notes with appreciation* the large number of contributors to UN-Women, and encourages all countries in a position to do so, to increase their voluntary contributions to UN-Women, especially to its core resources, and onwards, if possible through multi-year pledges;

5. *Requests* UN-Women to continue to improve its efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability and in this regard to continue to provide information on its programme activities, within the proceedings of the Executive Board;

6. *Calls* for resources to be disbursed in a timely and predictable manner, to ensure efficient planning for the full implementation of the strategic plan 2014-2017, in line with UN-Women's available resources;

7. *Notes with appreciation* UN-Women's strategic and targeted use of core resources, in line with its strategic plan 2014-2017, to leverage an increase in resource mobilization, particularly of other resources;

8. *Takes note with appreciation* of UN-Women's continuing efforts in strengthening normative-operational linkages, United Nations system coordination, improving programmatic focus, programme delivery and operational effectiveness to support the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment;

9. *Requests* UN-Women, in collaboration with other relevant funds and programmes, to present in accordance with Executive Board decision 2013/2, all requested information on cost recovery to the Executive Board in time to be included for

the consultations on the strategic plan 2018-2021 and the integrated budget 2018-2019 at its annual session 2017;

10. *Requests* that UN-Women, in line with its mandate, continues to:

(a) provide information on efforts to expand the donor base, including reporting on non-Member State donors and on the transaction costs of those efforts;

(b) develop strategies and opportunities to expand its partnerships with the private sector, civil society organizations, philanthropic organizations, the general public, multilateral organizations, international financial institutions and global public-private partnerships in a transparent and coordinated manner, as suggested in the Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector.

Annex II

Provisional agenda and workplan for the First Regular Session, 13 and 14 February 2017

Note by the Executive Board secretariat

Provisional agenda

1. Organizational matters
2. Evaluation
3. Other matters

Tentative workplan

Day	*Time*	*Item*	*Subject*
Monday, 13 February	10 a.m.– 1 p.m.		• Opening of the session
			• Statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women
		1	Organizational matters
			• Adoption of the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the first regular session of 2017
			• Adoption of the report on the second regular session of 2016
		2	Evaluation
			• Corporate evaluation of UN-Women's regional architecture and its related management response
			• Corporate evaluation of UN-Women's strategic partnerships on gender equality and the empowerment of women and its related management response
	3 p.m.– 5 p.m.		Update on humanitarian programming
			Update on the alignment of the Strategic Plan with the QCPR
Tuesday, 14 February	10 a.m.– 1 p.m.		Briefing on the operational response of UN-Women at the country level: Moldova
		3	Other matters
		1	Organizational matters
			• Approval of the provisional agenda and workplan for the annual session of 2017
			• Adoption of the draft annual workplan for 2017
			Closing of the session
			• Statements by the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women and the President of the Executive Board
On the margins of the formal session			Informal workshop on strategic plan 2018-2021 development